(b) if so, whether due to the starvation deaths at a time when there was overflowing granaries of foodgrains in the country, Government have decided to examine option of drastically changing policy of stocking foodgrains;

(c) whether the main aim and objective of the agricultural research and development was how to prepare a road map of the policy strategies and to meet resources available to implement the policy; and

(d) if so, what are the changes that are being made to make Agriculture Policy suitable to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The major objectives of the National Agriculture Policy are being addressed through various scheme/plans subsumed under macro-management mode to supplement the efforts of the State Governments for increasing production and productivity of agricultural & horticultural crops.

(b) After consideration of the recommendations of the High Level Committee on Long-term Grain Policy, Government has decided to continue the present open-ended procurement policy without any ceiling on procurement. The buffer stocking norms for each five year plan are reviewed depending on the requirements.

(c) The main aim and objective of research and development is to evolve suitable varieties, which can give higher yield and enhance production of different crops.

(d) The present National Agriculture Policy is comprehensive enough to address various dimensions of the agriculture sector.

Flood and drought in States

566. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the States which are affected by recent flood and drought in this year;

(b) the extent of damage caused to those States due to these natural calamities; and

(c) the details of steps taken to extend adequate Central assistance to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) and (b) No State has so far reported drought this year on account of deficit rainfall during the current South-West Monsoon. The Ministry of Home Affairs is concerned with matters relating to other natural calamities including flood and they have been requested to supply the necessary information.

(c) Ready availability of funds exists under Calamity Relief Fund(CRF) for undertaking immediate measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought and flood.

Crop diversification

567. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether crop diversification has been recognized as a device to reduce drought impact;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to propagate the device; and

(c) what concrete steps have been taken by the Centre in collaboration with State Governments for effective implementation of soil and water conservation measures through watershed development in rain-fed areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) and (b) State Governments are being advised to undertake diversification programme substituting traditional crops with suitable crops giving thrust on oilseeds and pulses which may help in reducing impact of the drought.

(c) The National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA) was launched in 1990-91 in 28 States and 2 Union Territories based on twin concepts of Integrated Watershed Management and Sustainable Farming Systems. The programme specifically focuses on: